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ABSTRACT

The literature on teacher education indicates that cooperating teachers are significant persons in the professional training of teachers, that student teachers are reinforced for reproducing the kinds of teaching styles they most often experience as students. This paper suggests a model of teacher training that identifies practicing outstanding teachers and utilizes them and their skills throughout the training process. It is proposed that videotapes of outstanding teachers in the classroom, as they plan curricula, as they interact with students, etc. become integral parts of the educational psychology courses and generic methods courses in the school of education curriculum. A review of literature on effective teaching gives a clear profile of the characteristics of an outstanding teacher who would be an excellent role model for beginning teachers. Four categories of qualifications emerge from this review: (1) minimum qualifications; (2) effective instruction, encompassing skills in classroom management and instructional techniques; (3) educational maturity; and (4) extraordinary service and skills. Using criteria establshed on the basis of these categories, outstanding practicing teachers can be identified and invited to participate in teacher training programs. (JD)

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Using Research on Teaching Excellence to Re-model Teacher Education

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Sirotnik (1983) rightly points out that educational practice has been largely impervious to higher education's attempts to modify and improve it. Griffin (1985) and Tabachnick and Zeichner (1984) present evidence that teachers tend to teach as they were taught. Thies-Sprinthall (1986) reminds us that research makes quite clear that the relationship between teacher trainee and cooperating teacher as currently practiced does not promote outstanding teaching.

These points are more than coincidentally connected. The typical teacher training program depends upon the concept of the cooperating teacher to model teacher behavior. Although sincere attempts are made to find cooperating teachers who display competence, most trainees are exposed to and model their behavior on teachers who do not exhibit many of the characteristics identified in the literature as contributing to teacher excellence.

Numerous studies report that the most influential impact in the student teaching experience is the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher (Brodbelt & Wall,

1985; Funk, Long, Keithley, & Hoffman, 1982; Haberman, 1983; Koehler, 1985; Kuehl, 1984; Seifirth & Samuel, 1984; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zimpher, deVoss & Nott, 1980). The student teacher is socialized into a system where success is defined largely by the cooperating teacher in terms of the social rules of the institution (Goodman, 1986; Kuehl, 1984). The stress experienced by the student teacher to perform satisfactorily encourages identification with the cooperating teacher who seems in control of the situation. Brodbelt (1985) describes this phenomenon as a two-stage process in which the student teacher accepts the cooperating teacher as a model of good teaching, imitates the cooperating teacher's teaching style and then develops "dependent-attachment." Zimpher, deVoss, and Nott (1980) report "... our study showed that student teachers almost exclusively modeled the teaching of the cooperating teachers ..." (p. 13).

The literature seems clear on the point that cooperating teachers are significant persons in the professional training of teachers. Unfortunately, the literature is also supportive of the points that typical cooperating teacher - student teacher dyads concentrate on classroom management, as opposed to instruction (Haberman, 1983), discount the pedagogy learned in professional courses (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984: Zimpher, deVoss & Nott, 1980) , emphasize the personal relationship between the two parties, rather than a professional relationahip

(Brodbelt & Wall, 1985; Funk,Long, Keithley, & Hoffman, 1982) , and, in general, collaborate on stressing "survival" skills (Goodlad, 1984; Haberman, 1983; Kagan, 1988). The result is that student teachers are reinforced for reproducing the kinds of teaching styles they most often experienced as students. "...they learn how to merely fit into the conservative and established patterns of traditional school practice..." (Goodman, 1986, p.109).

Sirotnik (1983), reflecting on data generated by Goodlad's 1984 study of over 1000 elementary and secondary classrooms, illustrates the endurance of teacher dominated instruction, low level questioning, emphasis on basic skills to the exclusion of teaching problem-solving, and lack of attention to other important variables. Because teacher preparation programs are most often unable to penetrate and change this pattern, instruction in our elementary and secondary schools is best characterized as mediocre, if not deficient.

Changing educational practice will require exposing teacher trainees to excellence in teaching throughout their training program, such that the effects of prior schooling and the student teaching experience will not overpower their academic training. The remainder of this paper suggests a model of teacher training that identifies practicing outstanding teachers and utilizes them and their skills throughout the training process. The basic premise is that professional courses

should connect theory and practice in such a way that naive learners are able to see the connection both cognitively and affectively. Koehler (1985) reminds us that beginning teachers often complain about not being taught things they need in order to succeed as teachers when, in fact, they have been exposed to the material. She says "We must ... develop ways of providing students with schema in which to place the various techniques and strategies of teaching such that they will be recalled and used in later teaching ..."(p.27).

This paper proposes that video tapes of outstanding teachers in the classroom, in their planning times, as they evaluate student performance, as they plan curricula, as they interact with students, etc. become integral parts of the Educational Psychology courses (Learning, Development, Educational Psychology, Measurement) and generic methods courses. When the college instructor talks about metacognition, explaining theory and research, a vignette from the tapes can be shown or assigned, illustrating what a good teacher does with this information. The desire for "real experience" (Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980), which seems to be a potent factor in the exclusive modeling of cooperating teacher behavior, would then be channeled toward assimilation and organization of academically offered pedagogy.

The challenging aspect of this proposal, of course, is how to decide which teachers are outstanding teachers and should be

used as role models. Koehler (1985) sees two different conceptions in the teacher education literature of what kind of teacher should be fostered: (1) those who will innovate and change education, or (2) those who will reproduce the "effective schools" research. She suggests that these conceptions which are usually presented as a dichotomy need not be. An outstanding teacher is capable of both.

A review of literature on master teachers and cooperating teachers provides a starting place for defining the characteristics of an outstanding teacher, one who should be an excellent role model for beginning teachers. Four categories of qualification emerged from this review: minimum qualifications, effective instruction, educational maturity, and extraordinary service/skills. These categories do cross the two conceptions discussed by Koehler, including characteristics identified in the literature as the result of research on effective schools and characteristics identified as necessary for effective leadership in educational change.

The category "minimum qualifications" consists of those characteristics which, if not present, would immediately disqualify one from consideration as an outstanding teacher. While this list is not intended to be exhaustive, it does reflect a reasonable set of criteria: years of experience (Abeles, 1987 ; Koehler, 1985; Zumwalt, 1985), good attendance (Zumwalt, 1985), meeting certification requirements, (Cangelosi, 1986; Koehler,

1985), meeting education requirements, (Koehler, 1985), adequate knowledge of subject matter (Abeles, 1987; Klein, 1985; Sparks, 1987; Willoughby, 1986), passing scores on professional tests (Abeles, 1987; Zumwalt, 1985), good communication skills (Sparks, 1987) and the respect of peers, students, parents, and administrators (Azumi & Lerman, 1987; Caldwell, 1985; Cangelosi, 1986; Klein, 1985; Willoughby, 1986; Zumwalt, 1985). These are qualities one could logically expect to find among teachers identified as outstanding.

The category labelled "effective instruction" encompasses the subdivisions classroom management, instructional techniques, and effective teachers. While classroom management might be considered a minimum qualification, the literature suggests that an outstanding teacher would exhibit a qualitative difference in management skills (Azumi and Lerman,1987; Doyle, 1984; Klein, 1985). Barnes and Edwards (1984) suggest that excellence in classroom management should be more related to instruction than to control. Azumi and Lerman (1987) and Sirotnik (1983) discuss the importance of establishing a positive atmosphere in the classroom. The establishment of clear classroom rules and careful monitoring of students is also related to good management (Doyle, 1984).

According to the reviewed literature, using a variety of instructional techniques and materials (Azumi and Lerman, 1987; Klein, 1985; Sirotnik, 1983; Willoughby, 1986), enhancing time-on

task (Azumi & Lerman, 1987; Barnes & Edwards, 1984; Doyle, 1984; Zumwalt, 1985), keeping student involvement/activity level high, monitoring student progress (Azumi & Lerman, 1987; Doyle, 1984), and leading students toward inquisitiveness and self-development are hallmarks of outstanding teaching. In addition, effective teachers "like kids" (Sparks, 1987), have a knowledge of child and adolescent development that informs their instruction (Griffin, 1985), know their field - pedagogy - (Willoughby, 1986), maintain high expectations for their students (Azumi & Lerman, 1987; Doyle, 1984), and produce high student outcomes/achievement (Abeles, 1987; Millman, 1981; Zumwalt, 1985). The difficulty of measuring student achievement attributable to one specific teacher is recognized in the literature. Schalock (1987) asserts that criterion-referenced tests should be used. Millman (1981) reminds us that content validity is an important concept.

The category "educational maturity" may turn out to be the most useful in identifying outstanding teachers. The subdivisions here are self-development progress, reflective-analytic skills, and decision skills. While personal traits as a generic concept is listed by Willoughby (1986), self-development progress markers are of interest to others (Azumi & Lerman, 1987; Ervay, 1982; Griffin, 1985; Klein, 1985; Sparks, 1987; Willoughby, (1986). Sprinthall and Theis-Sprinthall (1983,1984,1986) have been exploring the personal maturity of

teachers in relation to teacher performance. Using operational definitions of maturity based upon Hunt's Conceptual Complexity Model and Rest's test of moral maturity, they have demonstrated that teachers with high maturity levels are more likely to demomstrate qualities of superior instruction. Such teachers are more likely to be innovative and flexible, and they "read" student behavior more appropriately. Cangelosi (1986) and Zumwalt (1985) contend that superior teachers should have enough confidence to nominate themselves as such.

The ability to reflect upon, analyze, and articulate their teaching practices also distinguishes better teachers (Abeles, 1987; Boldt & Housego, 1986; Cangelosi, 1986; Greene, 1985; Kagan, 1988; Koehler, 1985; Zumwalt, 1985). Ervay (1982) writes about the need for evidence of autonomy and is joined by Sparks (1987) in discussing the importance of the ability to articulate a personal philosophy of education that explicates practice. Klein (1985) and McNeal (1987) add to the list the ability to make appropriate curricular adaptations. Being well-organized (Ervay, 1982) and investing in careful planning (Griffin, 1985;Sparks, 1987) are also mentioned. The picture here is of a highly professional person whose daily actions are reasoned and supportable by theory and research in education.

The third component of educational maturity has to do with good decision-making during the process of instruction - the "thinking on your feet" dimension. Doyle (1984) discusses the

importance of appropriate decision-making that adapts to the local context in the "fast-paced" milieu of the classroom. Cognitive Science research has shown us how markedly differently novices and experts organize their information and make decisions. While novices are still processing the information and searching their memories for the appropriate rules, experts have made what appear to be intuitive decisions and acted on them. It is this kind of distinction that separates expert teachers from less competent and less successful teachers.

The final category revealed in the reviewed literature includes extraordinary service or skills. The addition to the resume of volunteerism for extra responsibilities and services (Abeles, 1987; Ervay, 1982; Sparks, 1987; Zumwalt, 1985), and specialized training (curriculum development, evaluation) (Zumwalt, 1985) appears to be viewed as an indication of higher commitment to the profession.

Using criteria established on the basis of the above categories (minimum qualifications, effective instruction, educational maturity, and extraordinary service/skills), outstanding practicing teachers can be identified and invited to participate in teacher training programs.

As stated previously, the proposal made here is that teachers so identified be video-taped for extended periods of time in their "natural habitat." All aspects of their teacher-related behavior should be recorded: instructing, planning,

conferencing, managing, evaluating, recording, etc. The edited tapes should then be used in a variety of ways in the pre-service program. The pre-service teacher should come to expect actual classroom demonstration of each major theory or principle expounded by the academic faculty. Excerpts of tape should be assigned for analysis in relation to theoretical discussions. In addition, these outstanding teachers should be invited to impact the teacher education program in person - as co-planners and deliverers of methods courses, illustrating their educational maturity so as to be imitated by the novice teachers.

The benefits of such a program of teacher education would include: (1) actual classroom activity would be integrated with the study of theory and research; (2) trainees would be repeatedly exposed to outstanding teachers; (3) outstanding teachers would be encouraged to stay in the classroom (4) sufficient exposure to excellent practice should overpower the impact of personal experience and student teaching exposure to potentially weak cooperating teachers.

The model presented is at this time conceptual only. An operational definition of outstanding teacher must be developed that includes the above described categories of qualification. The logistics of extended video taping and editing must be planned and financed. Zimpher and Ashburn (1985) clearly differentiate the concept of a knowledge base for effective teaching from the concept of a knowledge base for teacher

education. Although not expounded herein, the proposed model is both theoretically and empirically supported. Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Science Theory, and Cognitive Development Theory do provide support for the probability that the proposed model would, indeed, promote the desired changes in the preservice teacher. Research on effective schools, student outcomes, and effective teaching strategies provide support for the categories of qualification outlined above. The ubiquitous call for future research is in this case quite specific: the empirical testing of the model.

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